

THE  
**ANNUAL REPORT**

OF THE  
**MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH**

TO THE  
Looe Urban District  
Council

FOR THE YEAR 1904.

---

LISKEARD :

JOHN PHILP, PRINTER, STATIONER, &c.



# LOOE URBAN DISTRICT.

---

AREA - 547 ACRES.    POPULATION (Census 1901) - 2,535.    ESTIMATED POPULATION - 2,570

---

THE

# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

## MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR 1904.

---

*To the Looe Urban District Council.*

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present to you the Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary State of this District.

The climatic conditions which we have enjoyed during the twelve months have been most favourable to the health of the general community. They contrasted most favourably with the conditions which prevailed during the preceding year. It is many years since we enjoyed so much sunshine, and the Summer, especially during the holiday months of August and September, gave ample opportunity to those who sought an outdoor life and the enjoyment of the sport which is to be obtained on our river and sea coast, to carry out their wishes. It is a great satisfaction that year by year we are able to note a growth in the popularity of our locality as a seaside resort. The accommodation for visitors is, however, taxed to the utmost extent in the summer, and the time appears to have arrived when the speculative builder may reasonably hope for a substantial and quick return on his capital, by supplying the demand for more lodging-houses and permanent residences.

It is a very evident fact, which should be steadily and constantly borne in mind, that the continuation of the popularity of our town as a health resort depends to a considerable extent on the policy of our Council, and that it must be from our representative Council that there must emanate encouragement and inducement for that additional influx of visitors which we feel we are entitled to see among us, considering the great beauty of our neighbourhood and the varied opportunities for enjoyment which it offers. Gentlemen, you, as our Council, can help so much in making Looe grow, even more than the town has done, in the popular favour and estimation as a health resort, by making good our sanitary defects, by pursuing a steady policy of improvement, and by remedying year by year any cause of just complaint which may exist. I therefore earnestly desire to direct your attention to the condition of the quay walls, and ask you to make the necessary improvements to ensure a fitter and more sanitary condition of affairs. It is clearly proved that the complaint against the sanitary state of the harbour is well founded, and the analysis of the shell-fish taken from the bed of the river, and from pools, shows the presence of the specific organisms of disease. It is necessary for me to offer a word of warning to those who are in the habit of using shell-fish gathered from such sources as an article of diet.



The Zymotic Disease-rate, as compiled from the notification returns, is shown to be 8·56 per thousand of the population. This rate, however, does not represent the proportion of Zymotic disease which has prevailed in the district during the year. Measles and Whooping Cough, which destroy more life year by year than all the other infectious diseases put together, are excluded from this return, for they are not notifiable in this District. They have both prevailed, especially the former, I regret to say, in severe epidemic form. All the deaths from these two diseases practically occur under the age of five years, and it is a fact that the longer children are protected from incurring infectious diseases the less is the likelihood that they will contract them. I therefore hope that the Council will use its influence to prevent children under five years of age from being sent to school. Nothing can be more harmful to children of such tender years than the aggregation of numbers of them for long periods, and there is no more prolific factor in the spread of infection than the, to my mind, senseless custom which has arisen of sending very young children to school. I regret to report that the incidence of enteric fever (typhoid) has equalled that of former years. This disease has shown itself more frequently in West than in East Looe in the ratio of 4 cases to 1. This proportion has been maintained for the last two years. The connection between this disease and the imperfect laying and flushing of drains is well known and appreciated.

An epidemic of scarlet fever commenced during the month of June and continued to a slight degree until November when there was a sudden increase in the disease. It was deemed wise and necessary to close all the schools, and this action certainly had a beneficial effect upon the spread of the infection. This disease has been very generally distributed in the localities adjoining our district. The epidemic was of a mild character.

There were two cases of diphtheria during the year, both of them occurred in the West Looe District.

The total death-rate of 14·00 per 1,000 of the population is above the average of the last five years. It is, however, comforting to note that a large proportion of the number of deaths, no less than 14 out of a total of 36, took place between the ages of 70 and 93. The infantile mortality is the highest recorded since the formation of this Urban District. The zymotic diseases already mentioned account for this increase.

## **PHYSICAL FEATURES AND CHARACTER OF THE DISTRICT.**

The health giving properties of our air and climate and the varied beauties of our district are becoming yearly more fully-appreciated not only by the pleasure-seeker and holiday-maker, but also by those who are needing nerve and general rest of mind and body or care during convalescence from illness. Our mild and equable climate is favourable to those desiring to live an outdoor existence, and our winter months are very favourable to the aged and to those who for any reason are below the average in bodily vigour. The southern Cornish coast deserves to be better known as a resting place for those who are recruiting after long spells of residence in India and in the far East. While so many and varied are the pastimes which our neighbourhood offers, that those of all ages can find congenial occupation which will fill the leisure hours of the wealthy, or the well-earned holiday hours of the toiler, or the days when to the convalescent the sun and air again bring renewed hope and strength.

## HOUSE ACCOMMODATION.

The building of new houses steadily increases, but I venture to state that if double the number of houses were built annually we should still find the demand for them equal to or greater than the supply. Every encouragement should be given to those who desire to build houses on the higher levels, for it is there that those two essential requisites for the maintenance of health and the sturdy growth of the young are to be found in abundance. I, of course, allude to light and air which are not always met with in sufficient amounts at the lower and more crowded levels.

## SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE.

Under this heading some important work has been done in the relaying of the sewers from Clement Court, West Looe, and on Tower Hill, East Looe. Since the reconstruction of the sewer in Market-street, East Looe, during the latter part of last year, a marked improvement has been noticed in the health of the people of that locality; and it is satisfactory to note that no case of enteric fever or of diphtheria has occurred in East Looe since the improvements were made, which could in any way be attributed to defective sanitation. I nevertheless wish to point out that there still exist many houses in which "flushes" to the drains are not found. This condition of affairs is fraught with much danger. It is again my duty to remind the Council of the imperfect condition of the drains in the neighbourhood of the Guildhall; to the faulty position of the drain for Beech Terrace, to which the pipes of so many additional houses have been joined in recent years; and to the want of the usual and necessary sanitary arrangements in the Church Sunday Schools at West Looe.

## DISPOSAL OF REFUSE, &c.

It is a matter for regret that the house refuse is still removed in uncovered carts. Many are the just complaints which are made in consequence, for many a pleasant summer morning is robbed for a space of its sweetness by the arrival of the dreaded dustcart, which under more wholesome circumstances would be welcomed. The inhabitants are still permitted to use the uncovered tubs for their house refuse, and to place these outside their dwellings to await the removal of their contents. As I have before pointed out these open receptacles are both unsightly and insanitary. An order that only covered receptacles can be permitted would be no small blessing to the public. I hope that these matters to which I call attention may receive the early consideration of the Sanitary Committee.

## MORTALITY.

The total number of deaths recorded during the year was 36, viz., 19 male and 7 female.

### COMPARISON OF DEATH-RATES FROM 1899 TO 1904.

Year	1899	...	rate per 1,000	9.56 (corrected).
"	1900	...	"	15.86 "
"	1901	...	"	13.01 "
"	1902	...	"	16.87 "
"	1903	...	"	11.32 (estimated).
"	1904	...	"	14.00 "

The chief causes of death were as follows:—

Old Age ...	...	...	7	Apoplexy ...	...	3
Measles ...	...	...	3	Bright's Disease ...	...	2
Tubercular Disease ...	...	...	3	Other Diseases ...	...	11
Cancer ...	...	...	3			—
Heart Disease ...	...	...	4			36



The ages at death were as follows:—

Under 1 year ... ..	5	15 years and under 25 years	1
1 year and under 5 years ...	5	25 years and under 65 years	9
5 years and under 15 years ...	1	65 years and upwards ...	15

Fourteen deaths occurred at the age of 70 and upwards, viz:—  
One at 70, one at 72, one at 76, one at 77, one at 78, two at 80, two at 82, one at 83, one at 85, two at 87, and one at 93.

Number of deaths in sub-localities:—East Looe, 22; West Looe, 14.

### INFANTILE MORTALITY.

Five deaths occurred during the first year of life, giving a death-rate per thousand births of 83·33. This is the highest infantile death-rate recorded since the formation of this Urban District.

#### COMPARISON OF INFANTILE MORTALITY FROM 1899 TO 1904.

Year 1899...rate per 1,000 births	69·43	Year 1902...rate per 1,000 births	55·45
„ 1900... „ „	65·21	„ 1903... „ „	30·76
„ 1901... „ „	81·08	„ 1904... „ „	83·33

### ZYMOTIC DEATH-RATE.

The deaths from Zymotic Disease were five in number, a death-rate of 1·98 per thousand of the population. This rate includes the deaths from the non-notifiable diseases Measles and Whooping Cough.

### BIRTHS.

Sixty births were registered during the year—40 at East Looe, and 20 at West Looe. This is a birth-rate of 23·34 per 1,000 (estimated).

#### COMPARISON OF BIRTH-RATES FROM 1899 TO 1904.

Year 1899	...	rate per 1,000 of the population	28·65 (corrected).
„ 1900	...	„	18·23 „
„ 1901	...	„	29·19 „
„ 1902	...	„	21·19 „
„ 1903	...	„	25·39 (estimated).
„ 1904	...	„	23·34 „

### ZYMOTIC DISEASE.

Twenty-two cases of Zymotic Disease were notified, viz:—15 cases of Scarlet Fever, 5 cases of Enteric Fever (Typhoid), and 2 cases of Diphtheria. These figures give us a Zymotic Disease-rate which is nearly double that of any year since the formation of this Urban District.

#### COMPARISON OF THE ZYMOTIC DISEASE-RATE FROM 1899 TO 1904.

Year 1899	...	rate per 1,000 of population	4·38
„ 1900	...	„	2·37
„ 1901	...	„	1·97
„ 1902	...	„	4·31
„ 1903	...	„	2·74
„ 1904	...	„	8·56

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

JOHN EUSTACE WEBB, M.B., F.R.I.P.H., M.O.H.,

Looe Urban District Council.

KERSWILL HOUSE, LOOE,

30th January, 1905.